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which is now taking shape in "sociology." We have this curious situation in America at present: The academic teachers of sociology are most of them endeavoring to limit the scope of their science in senses altogether opposed to the example of all its intellectual creators, like Comte, Mr. Spencer, Professor Schaeffle, Mr. Lester Ward. The academic teachers of sociology, instead of showing that sociology is the master science, the all including science of social activity, are endeavoring to secure for it a position "coördinate" with social sciences already in the field. This is obviously to a large extent the unconscious result of the pressure upon them of the academic situation. Instead of their being open to the charge that Professor Patten brings against them, it is their unconscious courtesy, not to say a certain sense of self-interest, which is leading them to take a position different from their own intellectual masters. Every age and country has had its own intellectual fashion. It is the fashion of America at present, it is likely to be for the next twenty years, to talk about "sociology." And this is a situation about which the observer need feel neither elated nor distressed. The great thoughts which have affected men's minds, and determined our intellectual attitude, have usually come from men, like Darwin or Maine, who have cared but little about the classification of the sciences.

THE HISTORICAL SCHOOL, A RETROSPECT.

BY W. J. ASHLEY, A. M., PROFESSOR OF ECONOMIC HISTORY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

The effective founder of the Historical School in political economy was Wilhelm Roscher, whose concep-

tion of economics was that of "a doctrine of the laws of economic evolution," or, as he elsewhere put it, "a philosophy of economic history." He not only gave the stimulus, but also contributed more towards the carrying out of his programme than the English reader ordinarily supposes. Hildebrand gave the same ideas a more attractive literary form; and Knies provided "prolegomena to the whole movement." The growth of the school was steady and sure; and when an attack was made upon the *Verein für Sozial-Politik* in 1873 most of the younger German economists seemed to be in the same camp. But when Professor Wagner came to the opinion that the time was ripe for a new theoretic construction, divergencies made themselves felt. The recent utterances of Professor Schmoller, the leader of the German historical school, instead of being more "extreme" than those of the older historical economists, are on the contrary scarcely so sweeping as those of Hildebrand and, in some directions, of Roscher himself.

If, in any country, the historical economist has become for a time an economic historian, it is but because there is no one else to do the preliminary work he needs. Though he seem to leave the field to the abstract economist, he has not surrendered his opinion as to the utility of abstract studies; and if an attempt is made to corrupt our children's minds and to teach them "morality" by means of a political economy of Utility, he will have to protest.